My dear Maria Rome Feb.y 22.nd 1872

You and I have become gossips as tho' we were next-door neighbors, whereas there are a thousand miles between us

I did get yours of the 9.th ult, it was full of sadness at our cruel position, but now we can write cheerfully & look forward with hopes of going on to the end of our lives with tranquility & comparative ease

I am glad to find that you try to be comfortable & soon you'll have the warm weather & be able to get out in a little drive with poor dear Tom

You enquire most kindly how I am getting on with my new house & servant & I am glad to answer most favorably & even pleasantly - I have 5 rooms, kitchen included - two beautiful over the great fountain of Trevi, one for my painting music & poetry - the other a show room for

my finished works & the fine old masters of which I have one of Paul Veronese (Queen Esther) another A. Carracci (San Gregory a third, & an Angel by Titian a 4th by Guido - some day these may bring at least a thousand pounds !! - They have not cost me more than £9 altogether !! They are much admired & not the least doubt are original

As to my new Servant (or rather my nurse) I took her with a view to my age & that I may some day require care & nursing as yet I can do all except my shoes & stockings She is 54 years of age, very cheerful & sings all day - when I feel nervous I take her out with me to drive & walk - She cooks dishes & has a woman at times to do the hard work of cleaning up, upon the whole she'll do well I think as I can trust her -

You'll be amused to find that my great troubles have not impaired my looks & people actually come to see me as a curiosity for

I am still young in body & mind – I often speak in public always with ease, fluency & good voice, with wit & even fun so that I am a favorite & there always a desire to hear me – 'Tis generally on the subject of Antiquity that I speak – you'll remember that I was always a chatterbox & with a great turn for fun – 'Tis a great consolation, a great happiness to me that all children are doing so well! The Bride Joan has offered me a home – if I go to England & this when I seem to be penniless! They live Denmark hill where she has a house & garden of her own & keeps an Hour at his work!!! But I fear that the immense journey would kill me & as I am so comfortable here I'll let well alone – also as my little income turns to more account, procures me more comfort to what it would in London for after more than half a century 'tis likely that I should feel more at home in Rome tho' now my oldest friends are dying off about me at 85 to 89 & indeed I am now the oldest Anglo Roman

P.S as yet I have not been able to paint more from here as such than anything else, but now I begin to be ready after all this turmoil about my Consulate, my pension & my house

How fortunate I have been for there is no encouragement in Art now here & no doubt I should not have been able to get a living by my painting, now in my old age I get even a pension & hope to pass the rest of my days in tranquility - The Doctors assure me a very long life as I have such a fine constitution so I'll patch & bolster myself up for a long future, my wants are few, I am a careful liver, moderate in my eating & drinking & I shall have just enough for a cab now & then, perhaps I shall be able to make a "do" of it - but I am chary of having "Do's" I cannot endure people interior to myself & would rather be alone Perhaps I shall feel my loneliness - All my countrymen living here take to drinking, so they dont suit me - I confess I should like some one to live with me, do tell me what you think on this point - I should prefer a Lady but she must be of good education & have the means of living in a moderate way